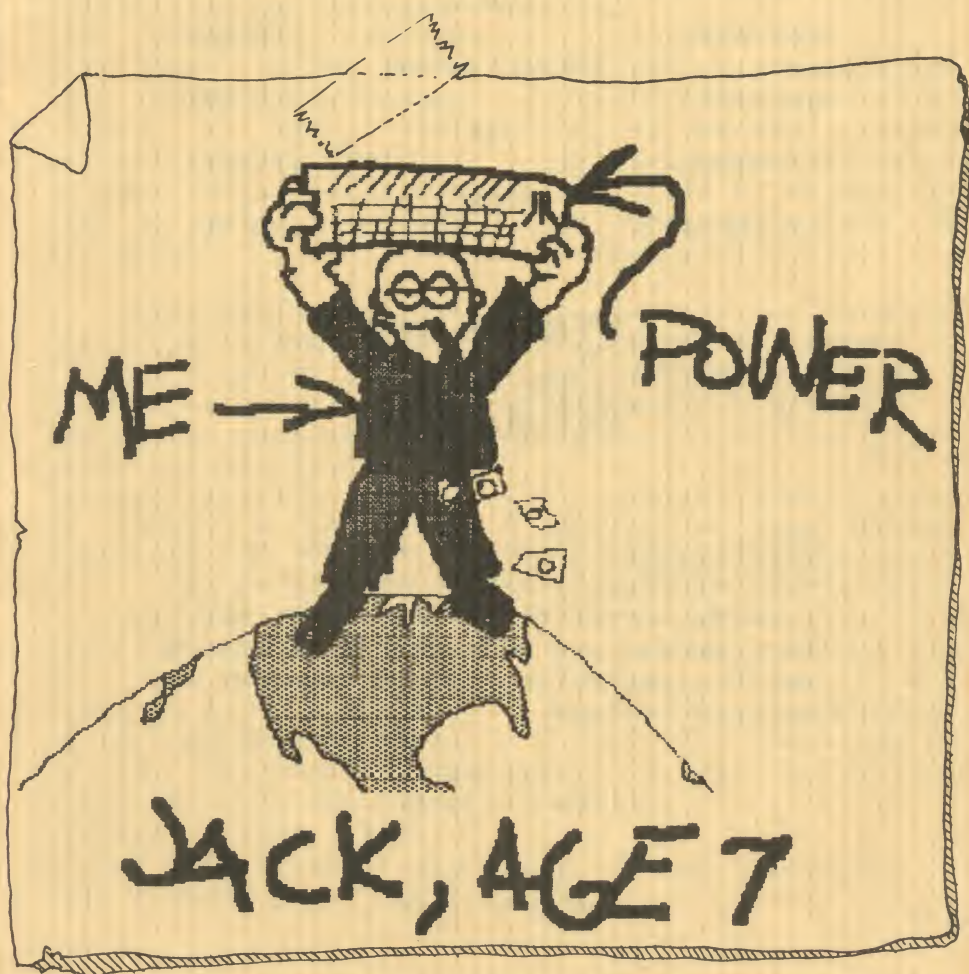


STATUS

N E W S L E T T E R

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Editor's File

It's not easy running a Bulletin Board System.

My eyes have really been opened by taking on what I thought was going to be a relatively simple operation. First off, the name change: NewsNET has become **Search & REPLACE** due to a conflict with the name (see Telecomputing, this issue). As if that wasn't enough, along came Charley... the hurricane without a cause. S&R was down for about a week due to storm damage, but is now back up to take your calls and uploads...

Whew! What a month. On the up side, the BBS *has* made it easier to put the Newsletter together (so far) and it makes me appreciate what people like Doug Boynton and big and little Nip Harrison go through to keep their boards up...

Speaking of "Dynamic" Doug Boynton, congratulations are in order: this issue marks the second anniversary of his **Telecomputing** column in this Newsletter. That makes his about the longest running column around! Thanks Doug, I couldn't have done it without you.

Thanks to everyone who helped out at the **Tidewater Hamfest** (August 23 & 24) at the Virginia Beach Pavilion. It was about 50% computer oriented, and we did very well in terms of impressing the locals. Special thanks to **PACE** for bringing over their STs (my tongue hangs even closer to the ground after playing **Mean 18** on the 1040!).

Have you noticed the upturn in the quality of the last few meetings? I'd say that **Buck Maddrey** deserves a large round of applause for the job he's doing as program/cruise director!

~~~~~  
**Thanks to everyone  
who helped out at the  
Tidewater Hamfest...**  
~~~~~

Welcome aboard to the esteemed **Dr. Floppy Hardisk**. Dr. Hardisk has volunteered to field all your soft/hardware related questions in a new monthly column: **Ask Dr. Floppy**. Now, if he'd only stop humming "Sympathy for the Devil" long enough to tell me where he got that **1450XLD...**

See you in about 30...

Ask DR. FLOPPY

By Dr. Floppy Hardisk

[Editor's Note: He came into my office one day; reeking of three day old program listings, his golden retriever, Baud, nipping at the back of his tattered lab coat... "Have I got a column for you!" He announced, handing me a smudged printout. I was grateful for the contribution, but now he won't go home (if he has one) so please send in your questions so I can at least put him to work...]

The doctor is in.

Welcome to "Ask Dr. Floppy", a monthly column designed to answer your computing questions. From raw beginner to seasoned pro, no question is too big or too small for the good doctor. Remember... there is no such thing as a stupid question; only stupid people who ask them. (Just joking!)

This month's question is from young **Dixie Diskpunch**, of Poquoson, who asks:

What utilities should I have in my **TOOLBOX**?

Utilities are sort of like over-the-counter drugs. Sometimes they help; some-

times they don't do anything, and sometimes, they make matters worse.

~~~~~  
**From raw beginner to seasoned pro, no question is too big or too small for the good doctor...**  
~~~~~

The doctor recommends the following all-around utility programs:

SINGLE DENSITY:

DOSWIZ: By Gary Crider, this public domain program is capable of recovering deleted files, clearing out dead sectors, and zeroing empty sectors. It will also allow you to view sectors, but not change them.

SINGLE/DOUBLE DENSITY:

DISKWIZARD: This commercial program does just about anything. It's an outstanding sector copier, it allows disassembly of machine language programs, and modification of sectors. I haven't seen an ad for it in the magazines lately, though.

SINGLE/"DUAL" DENSITY:

SHERLOCK 1050: Available through the ANTIC (cough) Program Exchange. Described

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as a utility program for 1050 drives, I cannot vouch for it. It's the only commercial program I've seen for 1050 drives.

DOS 2.5 UTILITIES: These are **DISKFIX**, which will allow the recovery of deleted files; **SETUP**, which allows custom configuring of DOS 2.5, and **COPY32**, which will transfer files from DOS 3 to DOS 2.5. If you're still using DOS 3, shame on you! Public Domain, available from many sources.

Whatever density, you should also have some of the following in your toolbox:

A good sector editor. **DISKEDIT** is one available through the **STATUS BBS** from time to time. This **BASIC** program will allow you to change bytes in a sector.

A good disassembler. Gary Crider's **DIASM65** is Public Domain, and does a nice job.

A **BASIC** repair utility. **REPAIR15** is Public Domain, and will fix most any botched **BASIC** file. It's mostly automatic, too...so you don't really need to know much about what it does...only that it's worth a try for **BASIC** programs that won't work.

The rest of your toolbox depends on your needs. Diagnosing a problem is the biggest part of solving it. Once that's done, the next step is to locate a utility that will correct the problem. Good reading material would include the DOS 2.0 (or 2.5) manual, **Inside ATARI DOS**, by Compute Books, and, of course, **Your ATARI Computer**, by Lon Poole... published by Osborne /McGraw-Hill.

Dr. Floppy stands ready to answer any question about anything from dead sectors to bit parity! If we can't find the answer, you're out of luck. Send those questions to:

ASK DR. FLOPPY
1605 Rollins Ct.
Virginia Beach, VA 23454

Till next time... remember, the best medicine is preventive medicine... and do something about that hacking cough, will you?

XM301 Modem- 1050 drive boot fix

NOTE: This fix is **NOT** an official Atari upgrade. If you attempt this modification, you do so at your own risk!

To correct the booting problems experienced with some XM301/1050 configurations will require you to have: three 470 ohm resistors, some solder, solder iron, wire cutters, and a phillips screwdriver.

1. Open the XM301 modem and remove the PCB assembly.

2. Locate the area where the cable is attached to the board. The wires will be labelled with numbers. Some modems will have these contacts coated with a sealant. Remove the sealant carefully with your fingers, small knife or screwdriver.

3. De-solder the lines labelled 3, 9, & 13 and pull the wires through the board. Remember which wire goes into which hole. Better yet, label them with a small piece of tape.

4. Install each of the 470 ohm resistors into each open hole. Push the resistors all the way in leaving them standing upward.

5. Trim the excess wire extending through the bottom of the board and solder the resistor in place.

6. Attach the designated wires close to the tops of

the resistors, solder them in place and trim the excess wire off the resistor.

7. Be sure that none of the resistors or wires are touch each other.

8. Put the modem back together.

Works fine!!

NOTE: If you have no electronic experience **DO NOT ATTEMPT THIS FIX.**

SUPRA 1200AT Modem

By Buck Maddrey

During the winter of '83-'84, the cost of telecommunications via a direct connect modem was prohibitive for many would be users.

~~~~~  
**A 100% Hayes compatible modem with a lousy terminal program can be totally inadequate...**  
~~~~~

Atari's acoustic modem, the 830, was still in use as well as a few other lesser quality modems. And for those who could afford it, there was the HAYES 300. Both the Atari and Hayes modems required the very hard to find 850 interface, not to mention its hefty \$229.00 price tag.

Acoustic modems at best are not very good, the phone receiver is placed into a receptacle resembling ear muffs, making error free transmission and reception a near joke. One alternative was the over \$300.00 Hayes. Its price eliminated most potential purchasers. The Atari 830 came with a terminal cartridge dubbed "Telelink". Most users canned this in favor of an APX program which would allow uploads and downloads, something that Telelink didn't offer. The scarce Hayes owners were suffering along with inadequate terminal software too.

Atari had stopped production on the 850 interface, so in an effort to bypass the interface void, released the 835 Modem. This modem sported direct connect ports and eliminated the need for the 850 Interface. Telelink was updated with some new features, but still no upload, download capability. A step had been taken in the right direction, but not the giant stride needed. Most of the 835 modems remained in the Atari warehouses until liquidation of stock to raise capital brought them back out recently.

During this time, Microbits Peripheral Products had been formed in Albany, Oregon by some young computer enthusiasts, they desired to set the Atari Telecommunications market on its ear. Their first product to hit the retail market, the MPP 1000C, was a direct connect, no interface required, modem with Smart Terminal software on cartridge. It connected to the computer with a flat ribbon cable into joystick port #2. The Smart Terminal was just that. It provided single keystroke access to:

- a: disk directory
- b: modem to disk direct, and vice versa
- c: copying the capture buffer to several devices, modem, disk, cassette, printer, screen
- d: delete all buffers
- e: create new buffer, so that more than one file could be captured before a save was required
- f: duplex toggle
- h: ascii, atascii toggle
- i: xmodem toggle
- j: 38-40 column toggle
- k: modem to printer direct
- l: load buffer from device for upload
- m: Dial answer functions- auto answer, auto dial, loading of numbers, saving of numbers, changing of numbers, etc.

p: parity toggle
t: terminal mode toggle
v: variable baud rate,
110-450

Atari soon released yet another new modem, the 1030. Built in software still would not upload, download, but the affordable price made it an attractive alternative to the higher priced models. Public domain software evolved for the 1030 and has helped make it one of the most widely used modems by ATARI users today.

MPP upgraded their C model to a 1000E with a new case, some new LEDs and replaced the flat cable with a round one. They also revised their Smart Terminal to include a 64 column driver, several more disk functions, and did away with the now overcrowded cart in favor of a disk. They also began to market printer interfaces and buffers, memory expansion units, and network peripherals. Financial trouble set in and the end of a good thing was near. Enter Supra Corp.

Supra Corporation stepped in and bought out MPP lock and stock, but not the barrel. The barrel contained some unwanted old products namely the 1000C modems. They

have kept alive most of the rest of the products and added a few too. They now are marketing hard drives and their newest product is a 1200 Baud modem, the Supra 1200AT. Just as the old C model was not made by MPP (Anchor Automation), the 1200AT is manufactured by someone else. The 1200AT is 100% Avatex with a Supra label. Avatex is no newcomer in this field. They've been around for several years but usually only in business and commercial use.

The 1200AT is Hayes "smart modem" compatible, a now standard of the industry. It has 8 LED indicators which show everything from power on to ring indicator and all between. Three switches on the front control baud, data-voice, and off-on. Option switches on the rear let you initiate test features and configure for special data formats. Power jack, RS-232-C Connector as well as the telephone line and telephone jacks are also located on the back.

There are two things that set this modem apart from its maker. First, Supra has included with the modem, its own interface. The interface is about the same size as a regular pack of



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cigarettes. It has two wires coming out of it, one goes to the computer and plugs into the SIO port and the other goes to the rear of the modem and plugs into the RS232 port. There is also a female SIO port on the interface to receive the cable from your daisy chained peripherals.

Second, Supra has rewritten the Smart Terminal software for use with the SIO port. They've also added a few more functions to the original menu, an eighty column driver, screen color, elapsed time clock, and fast key repeat. You can also choose either 300 or 1200 baud. It is possible to store up to 10 telephone numbers on each of three pages to be autodialed by either pulse or tone and redialed until connected if busy. The memory buffer is 24,364 Bytes or about 189 sectors on a 48K 800 and can be divided into 9 separate buffers for multiple file upload or download. Having been a previous user of the Smart Terminal, I have found the 1200AT software very familiar and easy to use. Of course there is always the option to do away with the 1200AT interface and connect a cable to an 850 interface. This would allow use of some of the super Public Domain programs with

the 1200AT-850 combination.

1200 baud on any modem is truly impressive. Four times faster than 300 baud makes reading text a little harder, in fact a speed reading course would be helpful. The real advantage lies in the speed of transmission of data. At 300 baud, a 100 sector file takes about 10 minutes to complete and at 1200 baud only about 2 and a half minutes. 1200 baud is more susceptible to errors due to line noise and poor connections, but by using XModem protocol, all errors are eliminated. Some of the information networks place premium charges for 1200 baud, however, it is possible to actually save money by using 1200 baud due to less on line time.

Most new modems today are compared to the Hayes and are rated by the percent of compatibility. It is my opinion that these comparison figures are insignificant. The decision to purchase should not be based on this comparison alone. The terminal program is the real key here: a 100% Hayes compatible modem with a lousy terminal program can be totally inadequate, but a 80% compatible modem with a terminal program that

includes the features you want can be exciting. The Supra 1200AT has both, high Hayes compatibility and a truly great terminal program and a flexibility other modems lack. I recommend it to anyone in the market for a 1200 baud modem.

TELECOMPUTING

By Doug Boynton

This month marks the second anniversary of this column. Hooray. The BBS is pushing 27,000 calls this month... since May of 1984. Telecomputing has come a long way since the days of expensive modems, 850 Interfaces, and 300 baud.

~~~~~  
**The question, folks,  
is, "What IS porn-  
ography?"**  
~~~~~

It's cheaper now; or at least the hardware is. Atari continues to promise that 1200 baud modem at **89 dollars** or so before the end of the year.

We'll get to the Hayes compatibility survey sooner or later; but not this month.

In the meantime, here are some tidbits that may

interest you.

By the time last month's issue "hit the streets", Senate Bill 1305 had been approved by the senate.

S.1305, you may recall, is the "Computer Pornography and Child Exploitation Act of 1985". Its chief sponsor is Virginia's Junior Senator, **Paul Trible**. Trible appeared on a local radio call-in show on August 8th, and was asked about the bill.

S. 1305 would prohibit the use of computers and interstate telephone lines... for child molesters to exchange information. It would also prohibit the exchange of pornographic information over the interstate telephone lines. The Junior Senator from Virginia told listeners that laws must catch up with 20th century technology; and that we cannot allow computer criminals to run rampant in our society.

Agreed. But let's not get carried away here. No one wants to see children get hurt. No one wants "computer criminals" to run roughshod over society. The question, folks, is, "what is pornography?"

The Meese Commission report is the definition many folks are using today to define pornography. The Meese Report indicates that pictures pose a much greater threat than do printed (transmitted?) words. Better watch it when you download Koala files from CompuServe. The computer cops may well be banging on your door!

On to happier topics. CompuServe has now joined GENie in turning off the clock when you UPload items to the SIGs. Coming from the company who doesn't turn off the clock (at 21.25 cents a minute) when it takes their computer five minutes to switch you somewhere, that's a bold move. Isn't competition wonderful?

By the way... here's an interesting item. Perhaps you were one of those who bought a CompuServe starter pack when they were on sale about a year or so ago. Many places, especially the ones going out of business, discounted them heavily. If so, chances are you may have more than one CIS account. I did. I stopped using one of them entirely about nine months ago. This past month, I got a, "Where have you been?" letter addressed to the "dead" account, with an

offer for \$12.50 in connect time **free**. Needless to say, I'll be reactivating that account *real* soon.

Speaking of CompuServe, here's a quick tip: Type your next command while the menu is still scrolling. CIS does buffer your commands, and once you're familiar with the screens, you can shave a few seconds from your call.

The summer doldrums will be over soon, if not already, by the time you read this. Talk will begin about what the computer companies will offer for Christmas. I'm looking forward to seeing what Atari's new 1200-baud modem will do. Advance information on it has been sparse, but encouraging.

NewsNet (sound familiar?), the firm that provides scads of business newsletters via remote data-base, is discounting its sign-up packages. It's still mighty expensive, though. Keep an eye on Western Union. We may see yet another major player in the CIS-GENie battle. Does anyone use Delphi? If so, have you been impressed?

That's all for this time. A little short, I know; but hey, even SysOps get the summer doldrums!

Heeere's Nip!

Well, Gene will be gone for a few weeks, working out of town, or was it vacation? No it must have been work, because his Atari is still here.

Enough of that, now on with STATUS.

Buck Maddrey, our program coordinator, has some great plans for the upcoming meetings. He has already started some of them, like having a panel of experts available to answer all those questions we always wanted to ask, but were afraid to. Plans for the future meetings include; classes on Assembly Language, Basic, Word Processors, and more. I plan to end the business and fundamental part of our meeting around 8:30pm, so we can get on with the constructive projects, such as learning.

~~~~~  
**It must have been  
work... his ATARI  
is still here...**  
~~~~~

We all enjoyed having the PACE group from Hampton with us at our first meeting in August. They were very informative and added much

insight on our answer and question section.

I would like to thank all the STATUS members for their eagerness to help one another. Good job!

To Gene: wherever you are, Hurry back.

Be good
Stan <Nip> Harrison

SEPTEMBER

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Submitted articles are preferred as disk text files, but will be gratefully accepted as hard copy (including handwriting) if you do not have a disk drive. If you have a modem, you can upload your articles to the Editor by calling the STATUS BBS at 468-1096. Articles may be submitted at any time, but will probably not make that month's Newsletter if submitted less than one week prior to the first meeting of the month.

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